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Panther Sports News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--(May 8, 1985)--The Eastern Illinois women's track team travels May 11-13 to Illinois State for the Gateway Conference Championships. The host Redbirds are the defending champion in the 10-team league.

EIU's best chances in the meet will lie with middle-distance specialist JANINE JARRIS (St. Charles) and throwers VALETA STRICKLAND (Chicago/South Shore) and DENISE MACON (Chicago/Kenwood).

Jarris has a time of 2:15.94 in the 800 meter run. Her clocking is the seventh best in the league. She was named Gateway Conference's Player-of-the Week twice during the indoor season before an injury sidelined her. The sophomore physical education major will also run the 1,500 meter run. She ran a 4:32.02-second in the league.

"I feel Janine is peeking at the right time," states acting head coach Dan Lowery. "She has been running well lately and I believe she will be a factor at the conference meet."

Strickland and Macon have been battling each other all season. Strickland broke the school record in the shot put with a toss of 46-5 at the SEMotion Relays a few weeks ago. Her toss is the second best in the conference this spring. Macon owns the fourth best discus throw with a school-standard of 139-10. She has been coming on lately and can easily battle for one of the top three places.

Freshman LAUREN LYNCH (Elmhurst/York) will be a darkhorse in the 800 meter run. In one of her first outings in the strenuous event, the versatile performer ran a 2:12.92--fourth best in the Gateway. She has been going back and forth between the 400 and 800 and it's unknown what she will run the league meet. Lynch will also be a member of two relay teams.

Fellow-freshman TRACY OLAWUMI (Blue Island/Eisenhower) figures to be a factor in the 400 meter dash. She has the 10th best time in the league with a 57.80. The speedster also will be a part of 4 x 400 meter relay team.

"I am optimistic about our chances in the meet," explains Lowery. "We have some people-given the right conditions-will really perform well. I'm hoping for an upper-division finish for us."